

Appl. No. 09/612,238
Amdt. dated May 19, 2004
Reply to Office Action of March 9, 2004

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

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Claims 1-12 (canceled).

Claim 13 (previously presented): A method for developing wheat gluten comprising developing vital wheat gluten in a non-aqueous medium that contains less than 20% water, under conditions wherein the vital wheat gluten is not denatured and wherein the amount of vital wheat gluten being subjected to said developing is at least about 28% based on the total weight of said non-aqueous medium.

Claim 14 (previously presented): A method according to claim 13, wherein the non-aqueous medium contains less than 15% water.

Claim 15 (previously presented): A method according to claim 13, wherein the non-aqueous medium contains less than 10% water.

Claim 16 (previously presented): A method according to claim 14 wherein the non-aqueous medium has a water activity which is below 0.8

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Claim 17 (previously presented): A method according to claim 14, wherein the developed wheat gluten has a water activity of less than 0.7.

Claim 18 (previously presented): A method according to claim 13, wherein the developed wheat gluten obtained has a water activity such that microbial growth is not possible.

Claim 19 (previously presented): A method according to claim 13 or 14, wherein the non-aqueous medium is a concentrated carbohydrate syrup.

Claim 20 (previously presented): A method according to claim 19, wherein the carbohydrate is selected from the group consisting of glycerol, glucose, fructose, sucrose, invert sugar, sorbitol, and lactose.

Claim 21 (previously presented): A method for developing wheat gluten comprising:

- (a) mixing a vital wheat gluten 20 - 60 % (d.s. w/w) with a non-aqueous medium that contains less than 20% of water;
- (b) kneading the mixture in a kneader at a temperature of between 50°C and 90°C;
- (c) continuing the kneading in the kneader until a value representing at least 75% of the maximal torque for kneading the mixture in the kneader is reached; and
- (d) shaping the developed gluten into a desired form.

Claim 22 (previously presented): A method according to claim 21, wherein the non-aqueous medium contains less than 15% water.

Claim 23 (previously presented): A method according to claim 22, wherein the non-aqueous medium contains less than 10% water.

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Claim 24 (previously presented): A method according to claim 21, wherein the water activity of the non-aqueous medium is below 0.8.

Claim 25 (previously presented): A method according to claim 21, wherein said method is conducted whereby the developed gluten product has a water activity such that microbial growth is not possible.

Claim 26 (previously presented): A method according to claim 21, wherein the kneading is halted after 75% of the value representing at least 75% of the maximal torque is reached.

Claim 27 (previously presented): A method according to claim 21, wherein other ingredients are added to the gluten during a later stage of the kneading, or before, during or after shaping.

Claim 28 (previously presented): A method for preparing a developed wheat gluten storage stable against microbial growth comprising developing a wheat gluten under conditions whereby the wheat gluten is not denatured, said developing being conducted in a non-aqueous media that contains less than 20% of water.

Claim 29 (previously presented): A method according to claim 28, wherein the amount of wheat gluten being subjected to said developing is at least about 28% based on the total weight of said non-aqueous medium.

Claim 30 (new): A method according to claim 28, wherein said media contains carbohydrate, and the percentage weight ratio of gluten to carbohydrate is greater than 62%.